



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927
Fairfax, VA 22035-1118



For Immediate Release

Judy Pedersen, PIO

E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

Press Inquiries: 703-324-8662

April 14, 2006

PR -027

First Cultural Resource Park Provide Details of Past

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Park Authority will open the community's first cultural resource park at ceremonies slated for Friday, April 28, 2006 at 10 a.m. Mount Air, built in 1730 and destroyed by fire in 1992, overlooks Accotink Creek in southeastern Fairfax and serves as a window to the past, revealing volumes of information about how people once lived in the years leading up to and following the Revolutionary War. Mount Air is located at 8600 Accotink Road in Lorton.

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland noted the importance of telling the story of daily life at the time of our nation's birth. He said, "This site was tragically lost to a fire but that has not stopped our ability to explore the lives of those who walked these paths or danced within these walls or toiled in these gardens. With every artifact we learn more about Mount Air's lustrous past and can provide context and understanding to a bygone era."

One of the highlights of the day will be the recognition of Mrs. Catherine Thorsen, a neighbor of the property, but more importantly, a champion for the preservation and protection of this site. Through her efforts citizens will begin to enjoy the site's historic, natural and cultural resources.

The 15-acre site consists of preserved and stabilized ruins of the house, walkways, gardens and interpretive signage. The historic record tells us that Mount Air was built by Dennis McCarty and that he and his descendants lived there until the land was sold in 1860. The family was part of the plantation aristocracy, and McCarty's wife Sarah was George Washington's cousin.

The artifacts found in the foundation support a picture of genteel living. The ceramics include costly dishes imported from England, China and Germany, as well as earthenware containers made by local potters who may have been slaves or Native Americans.

The number of broken glass bottles indicates that wine was a favorite beverage; other shattered remains indicate it was sipped from fine goblets. Utensils were of pewter or silver plate with wood, bone or ivory handles. Pieces of bone and shell tell us that cows and pigs provided most of the meat that was consumed and that oysters were a favorite. Buttons tell of elegant coats and waistcoats worn by men and beautiful dresses worn by the ladies. The clothing worn by master and slave alike was made on the plantation. Artifacts include the "tool kit" that would have been used in this task: thimbles, scissors and numerous straight pins made of brass. What archaeologists have found to date provides a more complete picture of life in early Virginia.

----- Continued -----

703-324-8700 • TTY: 703-324-3988 • ONLINE: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks • E-MAIL: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov



Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations, call 703-324-8563 or TTY 703-324-3988. Please allow ten working days in advance of events in order to make the necessary arrangements.

An open house will follow brief ceremonies. Visitors will have a chance to see an on-site dig, view artifacts and speak with staff. Light refreshment will be served. For more information about the ceremonies contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662. For information about cultural resource protection visit us online at

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/resources-crp.htm>.

Media Note: For photographs of Mount Air and many of the artifacts found visit us online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/press/photos.

Directions: From the Fairfax County Parkway head south to the Franconia-Springfield Parkway and take a right onto Beulah Street and follow to Telegraph Road. Make a right and go about one mile and make left onto Accotink Road. Follow to end and make a right onto Fisher Woods Road. The entrance to park is on the left.

###